

Breen Avenue Methane Gas Explosion Kingsford, Michigan

December 1996

BACKGROUND

In December 1995, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) became involved in efforts to control methane gas releases from an undetermined source to a residential area along Breen Avenue in Kingsford, Michigan. U.S. EPA designed and installed a gas control system along Breen Avenue during May 1996 to eliminate immediate threats to human health. The system is currently operating under the supervision of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and the methane gas releases in that area appear to be under control.

SOURCE INVESTIGATION

In order to find a permanent solution to the problem, U.S. EPA has been conducting an intensive investigation to identify the source and the extent of the methane gas in Kingsford. Participants in the investigation have included scientists and field staff from U.S. EPA, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the U.S. EPA Environmental Response Team, MDEQ, the Michigan Public Service Commission, and representatives of the City of Kingsford. During the investigation, samples were collected of air, ground water, soil, and soil gas (the air that fills the spaces between particles of dry soil). These samples were collected at varying depths over a large area. Throughout the investigation, U.S. EPA continued to conduct air monitoring in residences and commercial buildings in the area. Results of the investigation are currently being reviewed and evaluated by U.S. EPA and representatives of other agencies.

AVAILABILITY SESSION

U.S. EPA will conduct an availability session to communicate the investigation's findings to date. Representatives of U.S. EPA, USGS, and MDEQ will be present to answer questions concerning the results of the investigation and to discuss other actions being taken with regard to the methane gas releases. U.S. EPA will also

outline the future actions that may be necessary to address the problem. The date and location of the availability session are as follows:

Wednesday, December 4, 1996, 7 p.m.
Kingsford High School Auditorium
Hamilton Avenue
Kingsford, Michigan

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Detailed information about the project and the investigation activities is available for public review in an Information Repository at the Dickinson County Library in Iron Mountain, Michigan. The information in this file has been periodically updated as more work was completed. Eventually, copies of all technical reports concerning this investigation will be filed at this location.

If you have additional questions about U.S. EPA actions concerning the Breen Avenue methane gas explosion, please contact:

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U.S. EPA Toll-free Number: 1-800-621-8431 (9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Central Time)

Over the next several months, the responsibilities for this project are being transferred from U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) Ralph Dollhopf and George Hudak to Remedial Project Manager (RPM) Steve Padovani. OSCs Dollhopf and Hudak specialize in time-critical environmental emergency actions. RPM Padovani specializes in long-term environmental response actions.